

DICK TRACY . . . *Shoots it Out*

By CHESTER GOULD

"Come on, boys!" Dick Tracy called over his shoulder and whipped out his automatic. "Let's push up closer to the house!"

The building toward which the ace detective led his men was, to all appearances, an unpretentious, two-story house; but to Tracy, to Pat Patton, his assistant, to Jim Trailer, G-Man, and to the five other policemen, it was the spot destined for the final shooting with the Moline gang.

For weeks Tracy had been hot on their trail; for one week he had actually become a member of the gang, employing so convincingly the disguise of one of the killers, as to be taken in on a bank hold-up. There had come disaster, for, though Tracy had given the tip-off to headquarters and so brought about the frustration of the robbery, his identity had been discovered. By a miracle he escaped unhurt.

Thereafter he redoubled his efforts to bring about the gang's downfall, and the killers, in turn, sought a personal vengeance upon the detective. Their malice had been expressed in a series of letters threat-



Snipe Fell to the Floor

ening the kidnapping of Tess Truheart, Tracy's fiancée.

A guard had been placed, night and day, around the girl's home and Tracy had gone after the gang tooth and nail.

There now remained, to his knowledge, only five members. These included Chalk, the Eel, Jitters Moline and his younger brother, Snipe, and the gang's leader—which was no man, but the mother of these two—Ma Moline. She was an old woman, absolutely without fear, guided mainly by a deadly hatred of the police. Time and again her sons had rebelled, and begged to turn from their life of crime. But each time their mother had forced them to obedience; each time she had succeeded in a more daring robbery. Nor was this all. Her method included wholesale mowing down with a Tommy gun, whether her victims offered resistance or not.

The score against Ma Moline was a heavy one and Dick Tracy was hoping now to settle it.

"Push up closer behind those bushes!" Tracy snapped.



"Come On, Boys!"

The men scattered to obey as Tommy guns spat their deadly fire from the upstairs window.

Ma Moline was an expert marksman and Officer Morley lurched forward, his hand to his shoulder. But, scarcely had her gun spoken when Tracy's answered. In that upstairs room, Snipe cried out sharply and fell to the floor.

In an instant Ma Moline and Jitters bent over him.

"See?" Jitters whined. "I told you, Ma! They've — they've got Snipe!"

The old woman saw that this was true. Nevertheless her answer was a snarl.

"Shut up!" she barked, and reached for her younger son's feet. "Grab his arms!" she told Jitters. "We're going to heave him out the window. Then—in the confusion make our getaway down the back stairs!"

Jitters opened his mouth to protest, but one look from his mother quieted him. Together they hurled the body through the glass and its fall to earth had the effect Ma Moline desired. The firing below ceased as Tracy and the men rushed forward. A few moments too late they realized that Ma Moline and Jitters had made their escape.

"Go back to headquarters!" Tracy told



"Go Back to Headquarters!"



Junior Pulled Tess Along

the men in the car. "Send a radio flash to squad cars to watch the highways for Ma Moline. Also send an ambulance to pick up Snipe. Step on it!"

Ma Moline and Jitters had escaped, but there were the others. Later that very day, mistaking Toby for Tess, they cleverly abducted the girl as she was coming out of her friend's home.

It was Junior who brought the news to Tess.

"They think they've got you—and they've got Toby! So you don't have to stay cooped up now, Tracy says. He's gone ahead to Millerville and Jim Trailer is waiting for word from him now."

"Millerville!" Tess exclaimed. "We know that little town, and we know the country around there, Junior. Remember, we spent that summer at Doc's farm! I have an idea—"

"So have I!" Junior cried. "But you better get into some men's clothes. Then let's get down to Jim Trailer and be ready when Tracy sends word. Come on—Tess—hurry!"

He flew out the door, pulling at Tess's hand to hurry her along.

Shortly after Tess presented herself to Jim Trailer at headquarters.

"Perhaps Dick would not consent to

what I want to do," she said earnestly, "but I feel that I must be in on this, Jim! Junior and I want to carry on an investigation of our own."

"Yes—?" Jim encouraged her.

Tess twirled the heavy cap in her hands. It was a cap large enough to conceal her golden hair.

"Toby was kidnapped because—they thought they were taking me," Tess continued earnestly. "I have to help, Jim. I can't stand by and wait and wonder! And Junior and I know the country around Millerville—"

Jim Trailer nodded in understanding.

"I know how you feel about this, Tess—but it isn't little girls' work—"

With a quick thrust of her fingers Tess pushed her hair up and pulled the cap down over her head.

"Look at me!" she commanded. "Do I look like a little girl?"

The G-Man thoughtfully stroked his chin. Indeed, in her heavy trousers and rough sweater, Tess looked like a young man—a fellow who would do what he made up his mind to do. And one thing was certain, she did not suggest any connection with the police.

"It might work out—" he began, and then there came a sudden sharp ringing



They Saw the Black Sedan

of the telephone. "Yes?" he said in the mouthpiece. "Yes!—Okay! We'll be there!" Slamming down the receiver he faced Tess. "Can you drive a truck?"

"I can!"

"Come on, then. That was Tracy. He's out on the Millerville road near the Dover junction. We're to take a squad and hurry out—stall the truck—and wait. Come on!"

From a desk drawer Jim Trailer took out an automatic and thrust it into the girl's hands. Tess took it, jammed it into her hip pocket.

"And I know what to do with it!" she said as they hurried to the truck.

It was perhaps an hour later that Tess, with Junior at her side, drove down the lonely country road. Concealed in the back of the truck were Jim Trailer, Pat Patton and three picked men. It was dark now and a raw wind was blowing.

"This is the spot, Tess," Junior said hoarsely. "Here's where we park the truck."

"I know." Tess maneuvered the heavy truck across the road. They climbed out and set to work to remove one of the tires. Then, for what seemed hours, they waited.

At length a black sedan came speeding along. With a screeching of brakes it



Tess Dressed in Men's Clothes

stopped dangerously close to Tess and Junior. A heavy-set, pasty-faced man leaped out.

"Move that crate!" he commanded. "And move it fast!"

The moonlight shone on the gun in his hand.

"But—we can't—" Junior started to protest, when Jim Trailer, Pat Patton and the three officers sprang out.

"Drop that gun, Chalk!" Jim commanded. "I've got you covered! Quitting—just as Tracy said you would! Things getting too hot for you on the deserted Maloney farm, eh?"

Chalk's face was a study in surprise and horror. It was true he and his companion in the sedan, the Eel, were quitting Ma Moline's gang. But how had Tracy known this? When the two had been handcuffed, Jim and Pat examined the sedan.

"Look, Jim!" Pat cried suddenly. "See—that little red tam? That's Toby's! I'd know it anywhere!"

"They've got her, all right," Jim agreed.

Tess had come up in time to see and hear it all. Instantly her mind was made up.

"Jim—let me go with you to the Maloney farm! I know every inch of the way. There's a hill behind the house—"



"This Is My Chance!"



The Truck Shot Down the Hill

The G-Man readily agreed. Pat Patton took charge of the prisoners and returned with them and Junior to town, while Tess and Jim sped on toward the deserted Maloney farm.

Dick Tracy had received a tip from a storekeeper in Milleville. A man and woman answering to the description of Jitters and Ma Moline had been in the store. They had bought bandages and iodine—and had forgotten to pay for their purchases. Their trail ended near Milleville and Tracy thought at once of the deserted farm. Like Tess, he knew this country, too, having visited often at the Drea farm during Tess's and Junior's stay there.

Thus it was that the ace detective was stationed on a height of ground overlooking the forsaken farm at the moment when the two quitters had made their hasty departure. According to her habit Ma Moline had sent a volley of shot after them from her hide-out in an upstairs room in the farmhouse.

"Save your ammunition, Ma," Jitters had pleaded. "We're all alone, now."

"You're forgetting that girl in the barn!" Ma snapped. "We got her—haven't we? Got the goods on that flat-foot this time, I'd say!"

Then it was she spotted the detective. The moon, coming from behind a bank of clouds, showed him slipping around the corner of the barn. It was built upon a rise of ground, standing a good twenty feet above the farmhouse.

"It's him!" screeched the lawless old woman. "This is my chance! I've always hated cops and I hate this cop worse than all the rest! He got Snipe! Now I'll—"

Her tommy gun spat a vicious volley.

But Tracy had been attracted to a place of safety a moment before. The truck bearing Tess and Jim Trailer came down the hill path from the heavy woods.

"Oh, Dick!" Tess called out to him. "Dick—are you hurt?"

"Tess!" Tracy barked. "What are you doing here?"

"I came to help—to find Toby—she's here!"

From the farmhouse window another rat-tat-tat spat its deadly flame. Tracy saw that it was useless to bring down his quarry at this distance. He glanced toward the truck.

"It might work!" he cried. "But Toby—"

Then, from the barn, there came a muffled cry.

"She's in there!" Tracy called to Tess.



They Searched the Debris



Jim and Tracy Were Pleased

"Hurry on in, Jim, you stick with me!"

He raced to where the truck was parked on the high ground.

"Down the hill!" he cried. "In second gear with the throttle wide open—go to it, truck!"

The truck shot forward and directly toward the farmhouse. It struck with a crash, the rotting boards and plaster flying in all directions.

"Come on, Jim!" Tracy raced down the hill toward the heap. "We're going in after 'em!"

Ma Moline had seen the truck as it started on down the hill.

"He's in there!" she called to Jitters.

She had torn the framework over the driver's seat with a slashing volley. Too late the villainous old woman realized the driver's seat was empty. Frantically she called out to her son who stood beside her, quivering with fear.

"We've got to get out—jump for it! The snow will break our fall—come on!"

Then had come the crash. Ma Moline and Jitters fell with the ruins of the old farmhouse, and lay helpless.

Both were dead when Tracy and Jim found them.

"It's better so," Tracy said under his breath. "What a horrible thing—a crim-

inal woman—eh, Jim?"

"And an old one, too," Jim added. "Fooling around with Tommy guns when she might have been dandling her grandchildren on her knee!"

Meanwhile, in the barn, Tess had found Toby. The girl was unconscious, bound hand and foot and gagged cruelly. Tess hastened to free her and had succeeded in doing so when Tracy and Jim came hurrying to the barn. At that moment a car drove up and Pat leaped out.

"Pat!" Tracy cried. "I was never so glad to see you in all my life! We've got to rush Toby to the Millerville hospital."

"Yeah," Pat grunted. "I figured you might be wanting a lift. Guess it's a good thing, too—the wreck you made out of that truck, Tracy!"

Toby was rushed to the hospital where it was found her condition was not serious. She had suffered from shock and exposure, but would be able to return home in a few days.

"Nice work, Tess," Tracy told his sweetheart as they left her off at her home. "Now hop out and put on that blue thing-a-ma-jig. It looks better on you than the truck driver's outfit."

The return ride to headquarters was a pleasant one.



Pat and Tracy Walked Home

"Well," Jim grinned, "I guess that winds up the Moline gang, Tracy."

"Yes," said Tracy. "Thank heavens!"

"By the way," Jim said after a little moment of silence, "does anyone know you were drafted into government service and made a G-Man, Tracy?"

"No," Tracy shook his head. "Not even Pat."

Several days later when Toby was dismissed from the hospital, Tracy commissioned Pat and Junior to fetch her. She was taken at once to Tess's home where a dinner of celebration had been arranged. The meeting of the two girls was good to see.

"I'm so happy!" Tess said, while the tears ran down her cheeks. "So happy, Toby!"

"Oh, Tess! So am I!" Toby answered and reached for her handkerchief.

"Seems to me," Junior grinned, "you're doing a lot of crying on this happy occasion!"

It was a happy occasion. Tracy was able to attend the dinner. Luckily the telephone was silent and he remained for the evening. Walking home with Pat when it was all over, Tracy said suddenly, "I'm a lucky guy, Pat."

"Yes," Pat instantly agreed. "You are."



"I'm so Happy!"